DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 225 460 HE 015 814

AUTHOR	Gray, Hanna Holborn
TITLE	The Liberal Arts Revisited. Eighth David D. Henry Lecture.
INSTITUTION	Illinois Univ., Chicago.
PUB DATE	Oct 81
NOTE	22p.
AVAILABLE FROM	President's Office, 364 Administration Building, 506 South Wright Street, University of Illinois, Urbana, IL 61801.
PUB TYPE	Viewpoints (120)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*College Role; Educational Benefits; Educational History; Educational Objectives; *Educational Philosophy; *Education Work Relationship; General Education; Higher Education; Individual Development; *Liberal Arts; *Relevance (Education); Social Change; Student Development; Technical Education; *Vocational Education

ABSTRACT

The question of whether a liberal arts education is the best or the most useful kind of schooling is considered through a historical perspective. While education may be viewed as instrumental to the development of the individual and the overall society, some believe education should provide specific job training. In the first view, the needs of future generations are considered in terms of human competence, civic responsibility, professional ability, and individual fulfillment. In the second case, education is valued as leading to a particular opportunity for a given kind of work and life. Views of the liberal arts have varied from ancient times and the Renaissance to the 1980s. In the 1980s, there is a return to the view that education has become too fragmented and that in the late 1960s curricula lost their coherence and teachers their convictions. The character of education within the university requires educators who demand breadth in the approach to their subjects, self-conscious reflectiveness, thoughtfulness, and a respect for rigorous intellectual activity. Although a "core" curriculum may be a good approach to general or liberal education, liberal education is a particular approach toward education rather than a specified syllabus or curriculum. (SW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED225460

The Liberal Arts Revisited

by
Hanna Holborn Gray

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Univ of Ill.

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

HE 015 814

Eighth David D. Henry Lecture
University of Illinois at Chicago Circle
Chicago, Illinois

The David D. Henry Lectureships in Educational Administration are endowed by gifts to the University of Illinois Foundation in recognition of Dr. Henry's contributions to the administration of higher education, including his career as president of the University of Illinois from 1955 until 1971. The lectures are intended to focus upon the study of the organization, structure, or administration of higher education, as well as its practice. Selection of persons to present the lectures is the responsibility of the chancellors of the three campuses of the University. Presentation of the lectures is alternated among the campuses on an annual basis.

The Liberal Arts Revisited

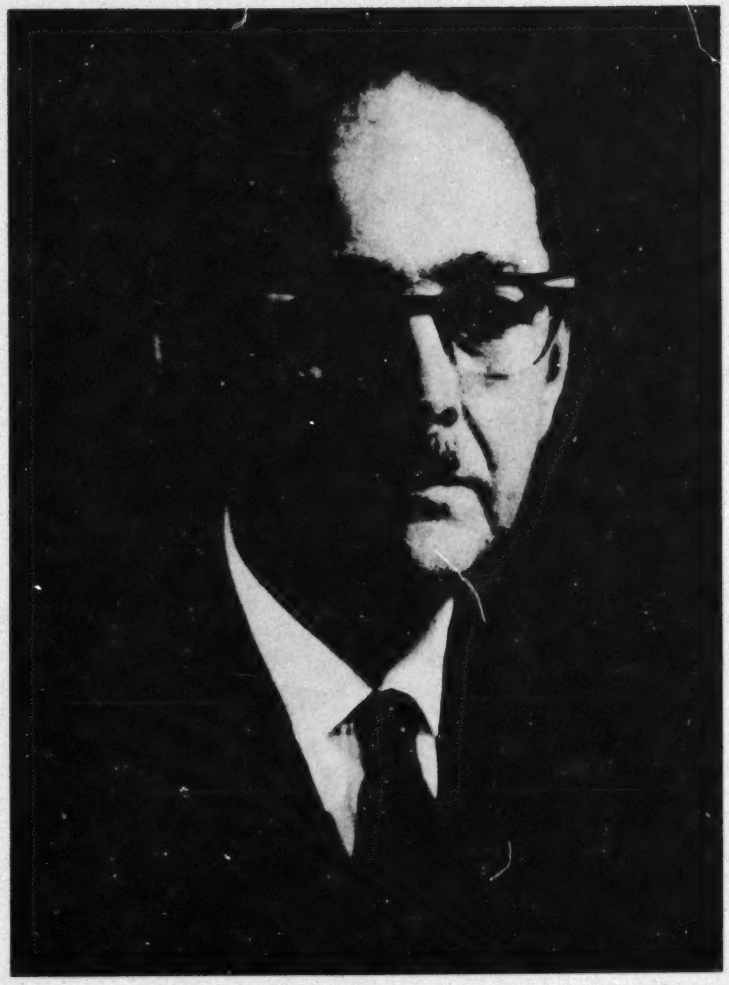
by
Hanna Holborn Gray

Eighth David D. Henry Lecture
University of Illinois at Chicago Circle
Chicago, Illinois

October 15-16, 1981

4

Copyright © 1981 Hanna Holborn Gray.



David Dodds Henry

President, University of Illinois
1955-71

Contents

Preface, Stanley O. Ikenberry 7
Introduction, Donald H. Riddle 9
The Liberal Arts Revisited
Hanna Holborn Gray 11
List of David D. Henry Lectures ..... Inside Back Cover

Preface

The David Dodds Henry Lectureship at the University of Illinois was established by friends of the University to honor a great leader of American higher education and to advance the profession to which David Henry still dedicates his life. Following the announcement of the establishment of the lectureship, Dr. Henry commented that he hoped the lectures and publications made possible by the program would mark the University of Illinois as a center of learning in the field of higher education administration which would serve both the University and the profession.

Dr. Henry asks of us a widely ranging intelligence in an effort to keep higher education abreast of developments in the world it serves. In his own analysis presented in *Challenges Past, Challenges Present* covering some forty-five years from 1930 to 1975, he pursues several central themes. He concludes that "the development of higher education may be traced directly to the resilience of institutions in reacting to environmental events, to their capability for response to social demands, and to their constructive interaction with forces that were simultaneously changing society as a whole."[1] Elsewhere, he urges leaders of higher education to understand both their own institutions and the broader flow of cultural and public affairs. I believe David Henry was correct in this regard. Colleges and universities must lead, but they also must adapt and anticipate the needs of a dynamic society.[2]

In this spirit, the David D. Henry Lecture Series enriches our perspective and provides a forum from which eminent academic leaders can guide and augment our thinking. The eloquent statement

[1] David D. Henry, *Challenges Past, Challenges Present,* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1975, pp. xiii-xiv.

[2] David D. Henry, "Leadership and the Presidency" in D. Kent Halstead (ed.) *Higher Education, A Bibliographic Handbook,* vol. 2, Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, The National Institute of Education, U.S. Department of Education, May 1981, p. 397.

by Hanna H. Gray exemplifies this tradition. It reminds us of certain perennial values which are at the core of the academic value system, while at the same time it introduces the reader to the ferment which is — and must be — present in any thoughtful consideration of the purpose of the university and its curricula. The University of Illinois is pleased to publish this lecture as the eighth in a distinguished series.

Stanley O. Ikenberry
President
University of Illinois

Introduction

I am very happy that two members of the current Board of Trustees, Dean Madden and Nina Shepherd, as well as the president of the University, Stanley Ikenberry, are here for this lecture. The lecture series is an annual one that rotates among the three campuses. This year it's our turn, and we are very happy to have it and our lecturer here today. I have been to many occasions where somebody started off by saying "So-and-So" needs no introduction, and I am not going to do that because Hanna Gray in fact needs no introduction to Chicagoans. She is well known to all of us — especially to those of you who have been Chicagoans longer than I — as an historian of distinction at the University of Chicago, as a dean at Northwestern, and as a provost and acting president at Yale before she had the wisdom to return to Chicago as president of the University of Chicago. I might say that her returning to Chicago is a particular pleasure of mine, because it has given me an opportunity to get to know this gracious, witty woman who has real style. It really is a great pleasure to have Hanna Gray give the David Dodds Henry Lecture in 1981.

Donald H. Riddle
Chancellor
University of Illinois at Chicago Circle

The Liberal Arts Revisited

by Hanna Holborn Gray
President
The University of Chicago

Let me begin by citing two texts with an almost scriptural connotation. The first comes from Alexis de Tocqueville writing in his *Democracy in America* about what he saw as characteristic of American culture, of American attitudes and approaches toward matters intellectual. He was concerned that there was too pronounced or exclusive a bias in American culture toward the practical, or technical, applications of learning at the expense of basic knowledge. In this connection, he observed, "If the light by which we are guided is ever extinguished, it will dwindle by degrees and expire of itself. By dint of close adherence to more applications, principles would be lost sight of, and when the principles were wholly forgotten, the methods could no longer be invented and men would continue without intelligence and without art to apply scientific processes no longer understood."

The second text comes from another major commentator on the American scene, Charles Dillon Stengel, also known as Casey, who said about a pitcher on his team, "He has wonderful stuff and wonderful control, and throws strikes, which shows he is educated. But then say you're educated, and you can't throw strikes, then they don't leave you in too long."

Both passages reveal something of the tension, something of the issues that have always dominated the debates in our own society over what education is about and what education is for. That is the tension that arises from what one might call an instrumental, or utilitarian, conception of education as having to do with application rather than the search for the principles of knowledge. This view holds that the justification of education in a free society has to do ultimately with

the tests of citizenship, of public service, with the criteria of whether education can be translated into professional and vocational goals. It has also to do with the question as to whether education in fact fits people for those needs. That, too, has reflected a long-standing conflict in our thinking about education.

Mark Twain once said that he had never let his schooling interfere with his education. There is a long history to the notion that the school of hard knocks, the world, experience *per se*, must be the true teachers as opposed to any school — that formal schooling may in fact corrupt and dilute one's learning powers, make one not only unfit for some real world, for some vocation, but in effect make it more difficult to undergo that genuine education which is derived from experience.

Now these kinds of differing and contrasting views about what education is about and what education is for, and what the larger social and the particular individual purposes to be realized through education might be, are characteristic not just of thinking about education in America (whatever may be our own special emphasis), but they are constants in educational thinking over the centuries. Because to think about education beyond discussing a particular curriculum or syllabus, or trying to describe what requirements people should have to qualify for college, or what they should study when in college — to think about education in terms of its purpose and its basic substance is, in fact, to be thinking about a great deal more. It is, in essence, a way in which people frame what might be called their ideal human types: what kind of person, what kind of competence, what kinds of goals might ideally characterize a society and its inhabitants and how they should be educated toward *becoming* such individuals possessing such competence and directed toward a set of common goals.

Therefore, it is not surprising that the great works of educational philosophy have been written by utopians and quasi-utopians: the Thomas Mores, Platos, Rousseaus, and others who asked themselves how might we create an ideal society, an ideal human being. In putting those questions, the utopian or quasi-utopian authors (for it's not at all clear, for example, that More was really a utopian) were in effect inquiring "What role can education have in producing such a society, in shaping such people?"

At some point, the values that we assert as those by which we guide life in the present must be values that we attempt to achieve, and to further for succeeding generations, through education. And yet, on the other side, combined with the utopian impulse there is the impulse to use such models of ideal education, or the educational enterprise, as a way of criticizing the present, of looking at what is deficient — not only in contemporary education but in contemporary ethics and government — in the manners and conduct of a world which

12

may be condemned as corrupt and which its critics would wish to see measure up to some higher ideal.

That critical awareness of the deficiencies of the present and the attempt to discern the contours of the future leads inevitably to thinking about education: what education is about and what education is for. All of us, as we think about education, about its improvement, about how to design a curriculum or the requirements for a bachelor's degree, are somehow criticizing what we see as the inadequacies of the present, perhaps criticizing what we see as the weaknesses of our own education. Furthermore, all of us are in some way trying to describe or to penetrate a future, since education must be for the future. Education is, as someone once said, "the debt that we owe to future generations." We may perhaps be making wrong guesses about the future, but we are trying to decide what will be the needs and opportunities which will provide for future generations the kind of education that will lead to human competence, civic responsibility, professional ability, and individual fulfillment.

Those are not easy goals. Side by side with that set of ideals there runs also that sense of education as an instrumental activity, education as a set of training exercises that must ultimately have some practical effects.

In our own society we have presumably tried to reconcile those two traditions, sometimes to emphasize one more than the other. We have sometimes said that, more narrowly, education should lead to a particular opportunity for a given kind of work, a given kind of life. We have tended to say that the justification for the enormous resources we should pour into education has to do with the social and economic consequences of such investment. At the same time, we have also said that education ought to be desirable in and of itself. We have asserted that about the tradition of the liberal arts above all, for this lies at the heart of thinking about education in our four-year colleges and university colleges. Increasingly it is felt that the liberal arts are in trouble. If to think about the liberal arts is to reflect on educational purpose, then there is asserted in some sense a crisis of higher education more generally in our time.

The contrast typically made between liberal and vocational education expresses a kind of confusion. "Vocational" conveys the sense of a training that is narrowly directed to external goals and exclusively technical skills — not so much training the mind as teaching a person to perform a certain kind of activity. And yet the deepest meaning of vocation is very different: a calling that embodies an inner and compelling commitment. Thus we speak of a religious vocation or the vocation of a teacher, a doctor. Such a vocation may be professional in nature. We mean that one's profession is chosen out of

13

some larger imperative and goal. It's interesting that we should have chosen to use that term to connote something confined and external rather than to express what might in fact be the outcome of liberal learning. The consequences of breadth, of liberality, of seeing professional training in a wider context would be to arouse a sense of vocation rather than to reduce young men and young women to narrow vocationalism. In that use of terminology, there is, I think, something symptomatic about the kinds of conflict and the kinds of issues that have characterized our discussions of what education is about and what education is for.

Once again these are questions that have of course been discussed in every age. In every age, the question of what ought to be the character of education has been similarly debated. Within those debates, the discussion over the liberal arts tradition has been especially acute. Through the centuries, the nature and the tradition of the liberal arts have been defined and redefined. On the one hand, there is some continuity in the essence of belief as to what the liberal arts might be about. But on the other hand, there have been extraordinary changes over the centuries, as we know, in the range and reference of the liberal arts tradition itself.

The ancients defined the liberal arts as those studies and those arts that were worthy of a *free man*. They really meant free as opposed to slave, and they really meant men as opposed to women; but, by extension, that term has been taken out of the context of an earlier civilization. We now would agree that the liberal arts are those studies worthy of free men and women in their capacity as human beings. We understand that freedom has to do not only with a state of personal and even political freedom, but with a state of informed cultural awareness, with a capacity for critical judgment, and the highest regard placed on the independence and the responsibility exercised by such critical judgment. This embraces also a state of critical moral awareness, which includes the value of intellectual integrity as a dimension of freedom.

Behind us lie centuries of debate as to how much of the liberal arts an educated person ought to know and whether a liberal arts training is really the best and most effective or even the most useful kind of education. In the period of the Renaissance (from which our modern understanding of a liberal arts education takes its origin), the humanists looked at and criticized the educational structures and assumptions of their day and saw them as revealing the larger dimensions and deficiencies of their own time.

People tend to think of the Renaissance as a period of self-conscious new beginnings. The humanists thought it possible that they might produce great reform in the world, but they also thought it

possible that things had never been worse and could never be reformed. Their educational thinking was the vehicle by which they criticized the society of their own time: its ethical values, its culture. Their diagnoses were as follows, whether right or wrong. The humanists believed that the kinds of knowledge and of scholarship and of advanced education, which characterized the university system of their own day, were too academic, too narrow, too pedantic, too specialized. In short, they thought that the universities of their time offered only a professional education, an education so highly specialized that it spoke in no way to the human condition or to the realities of the world in which people needed to be educated. It had little to do, they thought, with what they saw as the overwhelming need for education and for its foundation. In their view, that had to do with the need to deal with men in their capacities as social beings, as members of society, and also in their capacities as individuals whose ethical character needed to be shaped so that they would lead better lives and in turn improve the world around them. The humanists believed that the assumptions attached to scholarship and education in their own time led away from the investigation of human nature and the human condition. They believed these led to simply abstract and, in their view, sterile forms of speculation and inquiry — such was the humanists' condemnation of metaphysics and natural philosophy of their day. They thought these had no meaning for the kinds of problems which educated lay people — people who would be citizens and politicians and businessmen — really needed to understand. Therefore, from their critique of what was wrong with contemporary thought and scholarship in the university, the humanists concluded that by contrast an education in the liberal arts was that form of learning most relevant to the development of people who would become masters of their own world and leaders toward an improved future. They thought it was not enough to know what ethics was; they believed it important to know how to apply ethics, how to become more moral, how to shape the will — and not only the intellect — of morally aware and active human beings. They wanted to establish the relationship between true knowledge and the dilemmas and realities of the actual historical world in which they were participants.

And so in the Renaissance, out of the classical tradition and out of the classical texts of the liberal arts, the humanists created a basic educational system in the liberal arts. It was founded on classical texts; and it revolved around moral philosophy, the study of literature, of language, and of history. Such an education was conceived to be the basic and broad culture which would make people better citizens, better rulers, better people, better professionals.

15

It is of course paradoxical that what has come later to be seen by many as irrevelant, namely a training in the classics of the liberal arts, was for the humanists of the Renaissance the truly relevant — that their criticism of education in their own time should have been that it was too academic and that the bridge between learning on the one hand and the real world on the other was to be located in the classical liberal arts tradition. They saw the specializations of the university as irrelevant to the major preoccupations that people might have and to the major needs that people did have.

Now let us jump (quite unhistorically) to a recent era, namely the period of the 1960s, and examine once again a critique of education which became a critique of the contemporary world and a different vision of the future and of human purpose and capacity. We note that then the term *relevant* became the word against which to test the older understanding of the liberal arts. To simplify, one might say that those in the 1960s who attacked the undergraduate liberal arts curriculum and its institutions did so on the ground that they were *irrelevant*. These critics were maintaining that college faculties failed to make a connection between academic subjects and a real world that was full of social and political and moral difficulties. In a sense, they were maintaining that those ways of teaching liberal arts, or those kinds of liberal arts curricula, were not relevant to themselves either as moral beings or as citizens. So they saw themselves as actors in a world that required both a greater humaneness and a greater and more direct involvement in attending to the problems of that world. In a strange way, the conception of relevance and irrelevance came to be turned around, as it has been from time to time in the history of thinking about education, and the liberal arts tradition was attacked for its failure to relate academic learning to the problems of the real world.

Now this attack is different from another that has always existed: namely, the conviction that the liberal arts are not going to do much for you because they do not teach you to do anything. We always hear students or their families asking, "What do you do if you study history and decide you don't want to be a history teacher?" "What do you do after leaving campus if you study history of art or English literature?" How many of us are not familiar with that anxiety resulting from the belief that while college may be hoping to educate young people to be literate, imaginative, and perhaps even interesting, it may not equip them, as it were, to throw strikes?

There are, therefore, two different notions of relevance that have tended to surround controversy about the liberal arts. One is the notion of a higher relevance, the translation of the substance of an academic education into a more direct relationship with the shaping of individual minds and character and the capacity to relate those sub-

16

jects to the larger concerns of contemporary life. The other represents a more specific connotation of relevance, concerned with how it is that the liberal arts may or may not help a student to a particular profession, or career, or vocation. These are familiar problems. In the debates today, there is a drawing away, I think, from the issues of the 1960s to issues that may more properly be called those of the 1980s. There is a turning back to the view that emphasizing the direct relevance of an undergraduate education to the specific dilemmas of social living or to the narrower preoccupation with a career must be harmful. There is, however, an increasing concern that within the contemporary circumstances of higher education in our society the greatest danger lies in narrow vocationalism rather than in an exaggerated regard for social relevance. So we find a revival of interest in thinking about the liberal arts. It is again attributed to making a diagnosis of what is wrong in our broader society; it begins with a critique of education.

The new diagnosis says education has become too fragmented, that in the chaos and confusion of the late 1960s curricula had lost their coherence and teachers their convictions, that any clarity of intellectual order and discipline as the central core of undergraduate education had faded away. Those failures, it is thought, had in part to do with the view that individuals should be free to choose how they would best be educated and that the academy should no longer prescribe an education — either because that was thought to be coercive or because the convictions which might guide such prescriptions had diminished or been lost entirely.

And so liberal education nowadays tends sometimes to become confused with the model of what is often called the "core" curriculum. The "core" curriculum may be an excellent approach to general or liberal education. Needless to say, we take great pride in that tradition and its maintenance at the University of Chicago. But we are, I think, in some peril of falling into the belief that it is a particular curriculum that characterizes a liberal education as opposed to a particular approach toward education. We should not confuse (and that is true for us who have "core" curricula as for those who do not) a syllabus or a curriculum with a liberal education *per se*. We must be careful not to reliteralize the conception of a liberal education as depending on one series of classical texts, or subjects, or requirements that may in the end provide one with a certificate. Coherence of purpose and of spirit are all-important in animating the liberal curriculum.

Nonetheless, it is, I think, extremely healthy that the new debate over "core" curricula and liberal arts education in our colleges should be again so active. It reflects something of a response to the threat that people see the liberal arts experiencing in a world where, it is

feared, vocationalism and the pressure of economic circumstances may become overwhelming.

So much by way of background to an effort to talk a little bit about universities and liberal education. It is, of course, absurd to speak of higher education as a single entity. To do so would not only do violence to the realities of an educational system which has a variety of styles of education and of institutions within it, but it would also suggest that there *ought* to be a single form of higher education. We tend to talk that way; and at the same time, we assert the value of a pluralistic universe of education in which different styles of and approaches to education coexist.

We should not try to homogenize what ought rightly to be a very diverse universe. Nonetheless, when we speak of universities and their responsibilities for the liberal arts, we are taking in not only a broad range of higher education and a broad population of students, but we are talking about a tradition which, however differently it may be articulated, has some common presence in our universities that we need to be clearer about.

It is often difficult to remember that universities in our country are really so young. The university movement, properly speaking, is not much more than 100 years old. Historians of higher education tend to date the university movement either from the first Land Grant Act or from the opening of the Johns Hopkins University in 1876. It is often thought that if Johns Hopkins was the first true university that was designed as a research institution where undergraduate, graduate, and professional education came together, then the second might have been the University of Chicago, opened in 1892.

In that same period of time, many older institutions, ranging from the Yales and Harvards to others across the country, were growing from colleges into universities. Those colleges depended on the classical tradition. There took place also the enormous and fruitful growth of the university movement in the states, as in California, or Michigan, or Illinois. Some astonishing things were happening in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For example, at the University of Oregon, there was a teacher who held a combined professorship that included elocution, common law, physiology, and mechanical drawing. At South Dakota it is said that the professor of German, bookkeeping, penmanship, orthography, political economy, the United States Constitution, and the history of civilization also gave farm institute lectures in farm accounts, managed the men's dormitory, and was steward of an undergraduate boarding club. So, there were individuals who combined in themselves both the range of the arts and sciences and a good many vocational enterprises as well.

In the growth of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, debates over the classical tradition, as opposed to graduate and professional training, became intense — as did debates over the classical tradition confronting an emerging scientific tradition. Ultimately in the twentieth century, the new developments of social science tended to encapsulate many of the older debates that had to do with the relationship between the liberal arts and other forms of "merely" academic or professional learning.

The second great period in the evolution of universities as we know them came after the Second World War. At that time, the view that universities in fact ought to do more, rather than less, came to prevail. The belief that growth in quality and growth in programs must go hand in hand stimulated competition among universities to become comprehensive. All that coincided with the explosion of a student population larger than it had ever been, including a significant group who, coming out of the war, were in many instances more mature, more motivated, more directed toward definite ends than earlier generations of students. This was a time, too, of extraordinary growth in the research capacity and facilities of our universities, and a time when the forms of graduate training and of major scholarship and research in American universities came to equal and surpass their counterparts elsewhere. Such growth was founded also on a faith — a faith in what education could achieve in the creation of better-educated people — and of a freer and better society that would encourage upward mobility and afford greater opportunities to all its people. It was founded also in the faith that in education lay the key to the future — that more and more educated people, that better and better education would inevitably produce an improved world.

The reaction in the sixties was not simply to the multiversity and to its perceived impersonality and lack of focus, but to what had come to be seen as a kind of bureaucratic institution that no longer spoke to what education was about and what education was for. Describing that time of growth, Malcolm Muggeridge said, "Higher education is booming in the United States; the gross national mind is growing along with the gross national product." That was, in a nutshell, the phenomenon that some of the students and faculty in the later sixties were protesting.

Many of us now in the academic world were trained and came to our professional maturity during an age of growth. We are now seeing the reversal of the assumptions that helped shape the institutions in which we live — a reversal of many of the expectations that seemed almost unquestionable in the age of growth. It is a long and painful process to review those expectations and assumptions and to attempt to reconcile the purposes in which we believe with new conditions that

19

reflect the loss of opportunity and the modification of the faith that used to accompany not only education but the growth of education. This is a very inadequate description of the kind of internal spiritual crisis that confronts educators in universities at present, but perhaps it sets the context within which the new debates about liberal arts and vocationalism need to be considered.

In this situation, there resides a great danger of present-mindedness. In periods of constraint and difficulty, there is a tendency to think that the future will be exactly like the present. Therefore, one is tempted to narrow one's thinking about education and the appropriate development of educational institutions in two ways: first, to narrow down to the problems of survival in the present and not be able or feel able to look beyond; but secondly, and more seriously, one may diagnose the problems of the present and plan the future in such a way as to cure them, whereas the problems of the future as well as its opportunities may be quite different.

Let me give an instance of that. It seems to me that nowadays a number of institutions in the search for survival and in the search to become more "relevant" to their students' vocational needs, as they see those, are turning away from their own best beliefs about the nature of a liberal education at the undergraduate level. If that happens, they are not doing the service to those students that they ought — namely, to equip them to cope with complexity itself; to equip them to see the relatedness of things; to equip them to find ways of coming to judgments and of coming to understand the nature of choices that may lie before them, and others to whom they relate, in a way that makes sense, that has some logic, that has some coherence, and at the same time makes them responsible.

It is the responsibility of universities to keep alive subjects and ideas that may not be fashionable, that may not be popular. It is the responsibility of universities not only to protect and nurture these but, as it were, to create a higher relevance of the unfashionable and the unpopular. It is essential to sustain the studies of Egyptology and medieval history and sixteenth century French literature. That obviously does not mean all resources can be put into such areas or that there will not be enormous stringencies in the humanities. But if they are not to be preserved in universities then that is a loss to civilization and a loss to the capacity and potential of generations to come, to education and scholarship in the future.

In the desire to deal as we need with problems that cry out for solutions and with constrictions that require adjustment, this fundamental sense of the nature of the university, which is also at the heart of the liberal arts tradition, needs a greater reassertion than ever before. Its educational objectives have to do with those ends that

speak to the quality of intellectual competence, the ability to free oneself from the constraints of unexamined assumptions, the understanding of how to engage in the independent analysis and judgment of complexity in a remarkably complex world.

That may or may not suggest an instrumental understanding of liberal education. I believe it harmonious to think that the liberal arts are valuable in and of themselves and to believe that they also have consequences, intangible and not always realized but nonetheless real. I am led to yet another series of texts, which speak to what I think the liberal arts are in some sense ultimately about and to what our universities' obligations are to thinking about education, what it is about and what it is for, while acknowledging the very diverse ways in which given institutions may set about it.

One text comes from Robert Frost who said, "Education doesn't change life much; it just lifts trouble to a higher plane of regard." Another comes from Mark Twain who said that education consists "mainly in what we have unlearned." The third is from B. F. Skinner who said that "education is what survives when what is learned has been forgotten." Taken together, these three passages express the nature and the quality of what the liberal arts should mean to us today.

The character of the educational enterprise in the university requires a community of scholars and teachers who demand breadth in the approach to their subjects, self-conscious reflectiveness, a thoughtfulness about subjects under study, a respect for rigorous intellectual activity and its claims. Unless we reassert that conviction, our universities will become, whether we want it or not, vocational in the narrower sense and fail in their purpose and opportunity. Paradoxically their influence and consequences in the real world will be far less — for with the dimming of the principles of learning they will have lost the authority of their distinctive role.

The David D. Henry Lectures in Higher Education

"The Administration of Higher Education in an Era of Change and Conflict," by Clark Kerr, October 1972

"Can We Maintain Quality Graduate Education in a Period of Retrenchment?" by David Riesman, April 1975

"The Administration of Education for the Health Professions: A Time for Reappraisal," by John R. Hogness, April 1976

"The Education of Administrators for Higher Education," by Harlan Cleveland, April 1977

"Socially Imposed Costs of Higher Education," by Howard R. Bowen, April 1978

"Quality and Equality in Health Professions Education and Service," by Lloyd C. Elam, April 1979

"How We Talk and How We Act: Administrative Theory and Administrative Life," by James G. March, September 1980

"The Liberal Arts Revisited," by Hanna Holborn Gray, October 1981

Copies of these publications may be obtained from the President's Office, 364 Administration Building, 506 South Wright Street, University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois 61801.